

Well, happy birthday mining law of 1872. But may I say, I hope there will not be any more such birthdays left to you. My colleagues, please join me and 83 other Members of this body in seeking to reform the mining law of 1872; cosponsor H.R. 357 today.

MEMBERS URGED TO SUPPORT CLEAN WATER ACT REAUTHORIZATION

(Mr. HOSTETTLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HOSTETTLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 961, the Clean Water Act reauthorization. We have a chance, with this bill, to provide a great amount of regulatory relief to the American farmer. Farmers depend on the land to make a living, so they are last ones who want to jeopardize ground water with poor ecological practices. But an out-of-control bureaucracy has caused nightmare after nightmare for farm families by implementing a ridiculous definition of wetlands that prohibits producers from farming or improving their property because of puddles in their fields. I am particularly distressed that the National Academy of Sciences would sacrifice sound science for the sake of partisan politics, as shown by the timing of their recent release on wetlands. I commend my colleague, Mr. SHUSTER, my colleague, Mr. HAYES, and all the others who had a role in providing this much-needed sanity. I urge my colleagues who are interested in getting the government out of the American farmer's way, to support H.R. 961. Oh, by the way, did you notice the Republicans just produced a balanced budget?

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THE REPUBLICAN BUDGET

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman referenced the balanced budget. He cannot get to a balanced budget while increasing military spending, cutting taxes for the wealthy and the largest corporations, and here is the proof, the Republican budget.

It is impossible to do that unless, unless you want to gut virtually every other program of the Federal Government from child nutrition to student loans, to Federal law enforcement, to veterans benefits, Medicare, and, yes, Social Security.

They will all take a massive cut so the Pentagon can continue its wanton spending and the wealthy can put another BMW in the garage. I expected that kind of a budget, but never, never did I expect that the Republicans would go back on their pledge to not touch Social Security.

Buried deep in this budget is a little change in the COLA factor, just a little

change. It will cut future retirement benefits for veterans, future retirement benefits for military retirees, future benefits for every Civil Service retiree. And yes, Social Security benefits, too, starting in 1999 will be reduced by their budget.

MORE ON THE REPUBLICAN BUDGET

(Mr. EWING asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, I think we should have shame on us for the campaign that is being waged against our efforts to balance the budget. All of us know that it is necessary, if we are going to save this country, to balance the budget. And yet we have a smear campaign of unusual proportions.

My colleagues we hear about cuts in Medicare, except Medicare is going to go up. We hear about specific changes, but you cannot point out those specific changes. You just get up and spout off about them. We talk about tax cuts for the rich, but you miss the whole point, that there is tax relief for the families of America.

We talk about letters from home. I will answer those letters honestly. I am going to save the Medicare Program. I am going to balance the budget.

I believe the cruelest thing we can do is put fear in the hearts of senior citizens. The thinking Americans know that we are going to do it, and they support us.

MEDICARE CUTS

(Mr. SANDERS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of 80,000 Vermont senior citizens who receive Medicare, I rise today in vehement opposition to the proposed 7-year, \$400 billion cut in Medicare funding proposed by the Republican leadership.

Today under present funding, many Vermont seniors are hard-pressed to pay the high cost of Medicare premiums, and many others cannot afford the expensive prescription drugs that they desperately need. Any cuts which will raise premiums or cut benefits or raise deductible will cause terrible pain for some of the most hard-pressed citizens in America and in Vermont.

It is unconscionable to cut back on Medicare when we are giving huge tax breaks to the wealthiest people in this country. It is unconscionable to cut back on Medicare when we spend \$100 billion a year on corporate welfare.

THE PHELPS SCHOOL

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the Phelps School from Malvern, PA. The students at that school, the senior class is here today, and I want to recognize them.

The Phelps School whose motto is "dedication to the individual boy," strives to meet the needs and develop the strengths of each of its students.

The teachers and faculty take great pride in empowering young men to improve themselves. The school fosters the growth of each student, academically, socially, and personally. In other words, Mr. Speaker, it builds character, something sorely needed in America today.

The Phelps School is a small institution where every young man feels special, like a member of a family. The Phelps School exemplifies a good education today in America. Students come to the school as boys and leave as young men, ready to further their education.

I take great pride today in welcoming the Phelps School and the senior class. I wish them all the best as they begin their journey towards the rest of their lives. I know they are well prepared and ready for the world, as all the school's graduates have been for almost 50 years. My hat is off to the director, Mr. Phelps, and all the seniors.

REPUBLICANS BREAK CONTRACT WITH SENIORS

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, there is a loud shattering sound all over Capitol Hill today as the Republicans rush to break our Nation's historic contract with its senior citizens.

House Republicans today make it official: They want to cut Medicare and Medicaid by \$464 billion in order to pay for a tax cut for the wealthiest Americans.

And now they have added a new ingredient to this sickening stew. Now House Republicans want to redefine the Consumer Price Index and lower cost-of-living adjustments for Social Security recipients. So much for their promise to keep Social Security off the table.

In short, the Republican plan squeezes seniors from both ends. Seniors would have to pay more for health care, and they would be less able to afford that increase because they would get a smaller Social Security COLA.

Altogether, this plan would cost 37 million seniors \$900 more a year so a lucky 1.1 million of the wealthiest taxpayers can enjoy a \$20,000 bonus.

The Republican plan does not save Medicare. Instead it uses Medicare as a piggybank for tax cuts we cannot afford and do not need.